

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

news release

For Release on Delivery 8:00 p.m. (CDT), August 21, 1976

## KLEPPE EMPHASIZES FEDERAL-STATE COOPERATION IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Secretary of the Interior Thomas S. Kleppe told the South Dakota Wildlife Federation today that he does not intend "to request any legislation that would in any way provide authority for Federal regulation of wildlife species on public lands."

Addressing the wildlife group at Pierre, S.D., the Interior Secretary referred to a recent U. S. Supreme Court decision on the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act. The decision, he said, "is interpreted to mean that Congress has the authority to regulate and protect wildlife on Federal public lands, State laws notwithstanding.

"The question is not whether Congress can delegate wildlife functions to Federal agencies, but whether it should," Kleppe declared.

"The States have--and I assume will continue to--set hunting, fishing, and trapping laws and regulations which apply on those lands, except as modified by Federal legislation such as the Endangered Species Act, the Wild Horse and Burro Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act," he continued.

"Our policy relating to the responsibilities of the Interior agencies and the States was spelled out in 1970, and remains unchanged. These regulations encourage a maximum degree of cooperation between Federal and State employees who are carrying out their respective roles on Federal lands.

"This division of responsibility has worked well, and I would not change it," Kleppe said. "Where we have the authority to delegate our management responsibilities to the States, we are doing so as rapidly as possible in accordance with legislation and court rulings."

Kleppe noted that 59 of South Dakota's 67 counties have been declared drought disaster areas this year, and that Interior's U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has made lands available for haying and grazing on refuges and waterfowl production areas. "We are keenly aware of the concern that wildlife habitat has been unduly sacrificed," Kleppe said. "This is not the case. We have acted responsibly to help drought-stricken farmers without any significant cost to wildlife."